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## HOULTON BAND OF MALISEET INDIANS

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Dear Mr. Silva:

August 18, 2000

This letter constitutes our additional comments regarding the State of Maine's application to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for authorization to administer the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) within state boundaries - including tribal lands. As stated in our first set of comments, we strongly oppose the State's request to implement a NPDES program on tribal lands. The two legal analyses attached discuss the reasons EPA should not delegate this authority to the State on legal grounds. In particular, these discussions emphasize the obligation the federal government undertook when it enacted the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act to ensure the continuation of the cultures and traditions of Tribes in the state of Maine and EPA's trust responsibility to protect tribal lands and resources from environmental harm. I will attempt to convey to you through our language, our stories, and our words (see attached) some sense of our cultural and spiritual interconnectedness with the sky, the water and the land, the plants and the animals that sustain us.

We are Woolustkw-kieg, "people of the beautiful, flowing river." We have always been a riverine people, living beside, traveling on, and gaining our sustenance from the Woolustw (now known as the St. John) river and the surrounding hunting grounds. Renowned birchbark canoe builders, our homelands, filled with the productive soils that now grow potatoes, once grew the biggest and best canoe birches. With these light, flexible, and sturdy craft we plied the tributaries of the Woolustkw to reach our hunting grounds and portage to other streams and rivers in other watersheds. The significance of the river in our culture is reflected in the tales of Gluskap, our culture-hero. One Maliseet tale recounts an episode in the life of Gluskap when he frees the waters of the Woolustkw from the dams of beavers who in that long ago time were much larger than they are today. Gluskap also created many of the outcroppings, islands, and stream outlets along the Woolustw. In another tale, Gluskap helps a band of Indians whose water had become fouled by the serpent Akwulabemu. Gluskap kills Akwulabemu and "straight away the springs and brooks filled with water that was clean and pure."

We are a people who have lived in our homelands since the beginning of creation. We believe that all creation, the animals, plants, rocks, and elements have spirits and are our relations. Many of our stories reflect this belief. Our tradition tell us we were created from the brown ash tree. In The Boy Who Lived with Bears a young boy lost in the woods comes upon a bear's den and mistaking the she-bear who lives there for a woman and her cubs for children he stays with the bears and they feed the young boy and keep him warm and safe. In The Mountain Man a young

Page 2 - HBMI comments on Maine NPDES application  
August 18, 2000

woman, vowing she will not marry unless "yonder mountain becomes a man," is met by that mountain in the form of a man who comes to marry her. In The Origin of Corn, a young warrior marries an unusual Indian woman with golden hair. When she grows old and ready to die her husband does not want to part with her. She tells him if he wants to have her with him always, in the spring he should drag her body seven times around a clearing. He does so and the next fall when he returns, the clearing is full of yellow waving corn. Fred Tomah, one of our tribal elders, related a Maliseet tale during an EPA Tribal Training session that describes the adventures of a journeying Indian. We learn at the end that the story of the Indian is the dream of a partridge sleeping in a tree. Many tales speak of animals turning into humans and humans turning into animals. Noxious insects come into being when the troublesome shaman Poktcinskwas upon dying turns herself into bees, hornets, flies and mosquitos.

We understand and appreciate the gifts of survival the Creator gave his creatures and look to the spirits of the animals for guidance and strength. In many of our stories, Indians and companions or relatives of Gluskap with special powers have the names of animals such as Bear, Fisher, Martin, Mink, Owl, Partridge, Raccoon, Chief Raven, Skunk, Sturgeon, Turtle, Woodchuck, Wolf and the Caribou Boys.

One story tells how Ableegumooch the Rabbit through a series of misadventures guiding Uskool the Fisher to his wedding, loses his whole upper lip, straight even legs, and long bushy tail. Gluskap consoles Ableegumooch by showing him that his cleft lip will help him smell clover better, his long, bent legs help him run faster from Wokwes the fox, and his small tail won't catch in the thorns and brambles where he hides. Uskool's bride rewards Ableegumooch with a coat of white fur to hide Ableegumooch from his enemies in winter.

We understand that all of creation is important, that nature must be in balance and if we disturb that balance we will suffer.

In one Gluskap tale, Wind Bird, Chief Raven's band hasn't hunted and fished in many days because it so windy they cannot get near any game and do not dare launch a canoe. Gluskap advises Chief Raven to send the Caribou boys up the mountain where the Wind Bird lives to tie his wings. But when they do so no wind blows at all. All the waters become stagnant and it is too warm for there is no cooling breeze. After consulting with Gluskap, Chief Raven sends the Caribou boys to untie one of the Wind Bird's wings and let him loose. Since then everything has gone well.

Another story tells of a young man Widjek who though gentle and friendly and well-liked in his tribe, was also laughed at because he was awkward and clumsy. His clumsiness kept him from hunting successfully and thus from marrying until Widjek met Gluskap. In the form of a bear, Gluskap gives Widjek a magic horn to hear game and magic feathers to put them to sleep so he can supply his tribe with food. Gluskap says to Widjek "kill no more than you need for food and these magical powers will never fail you." This story represents a terrible foreshadowing of the future.

*Page 2 - HBMI comments on Maine NPDES application  
August 18, 2000*

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*Page 3 - HBMI comments on Maine NPDES application  
August 18, 2000*

In the late 1700's and throughout the 1800's, over-hunting and habitat loss from European settlement eventually forced our ancestors away from their hunter/gatherer ways. The wolf and the caribou, our relatives, were gone from our lands. Our Band settled in the area around Houlton, Maine and became part of the white settler's economy.

We have regained some ground. We have a small amount of trust land that we purchased along the Meduxnekeag River, a tributary of the St. John. But our river, the Meduxnekeag, rather than the beautiful and flowing river of our identity, is choked with long filaments of algae during the dry summer season or brown with sediments after a rainfall and contaminated with high levels of bacteria. The salmon which used to sustain us is gone from the river. Even if they returned, we are afraid to eat fish from the river because they are contaminated with mercury and DDT. One of our old gathering ways, the harvesting of fiddlehead ferns in the spring for food and as a spring tonic is a very important part of culture today. Yet because they grow in the part of the river's floodplain that is inundated every year, we fear this food may also be contaminated and once more one of our cultural practices is in danger.

We still make beautiful, sturdy baskets from brown ash, another strong and vital part of our culture. Yet, today, the brown ash tree, the source of our creation, is dying throughout its range. We believe this is a result of climatic warming from burning fossil fuels.

We recently asked our membership to answer questions about trust lands and natural resources they want to purchase and how they want to use them. We also asked them to tell us anything they wanted to at the end of the survey. Here are some of their comments:

"culture and genealogy are very important - my grandfather hiked and trapped here, my great grandma use to gather wood here. I desire that the old ways be embedded in the young generations..."

"I think that land that would sustain life would be the best to purchase"

"I think if we purchase land we should leave it in its original habitat and state. It would keep all the animals in the area for hunting and fishing"

"I would love to see pristine nature made available..."

"I think that buying tribal lands is really great. It gives people a chance to explore the wilderness and to get to know themselves.

"I believe that our past is just as important; because our people have lost a big part of our past, we should rebuild our past in order to make an honest future for our children and grandchildren; you see our ways someday will be back. We need to teach our young people now for the future."

"If possible it would be nice to purchase both land to be developed and land to be preserved."

*Page 3 - HBMI comments on Maine NPDES application*

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*Page 4 - HBMI comments on Maine NPDES application  
August 18, 2000*

"I like anything we have. I like nature and animals that god brought to this earth."

"Remember our Future, the Children."

Sincerely,

*Brenda Commander*

Brenda A. Commander  
Tribal Chief

Enclosures (3)

Cc: Richard Hamilton, Chief, Penobscot Nation  
Richard Stevens, Governor Passamaquoddy Tribe, Indian TWP  
Richard Doyle, Governor Passamaquoddy Tribe, Pleasant Pt.  
William Phillips, Chief, Aroostook Band of Micmacs

## *MALECITE INDIAN TALES*



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface.....	v
Gluskap myths.....	1
(1). Gluskap.....	1
(2). Gluskap and the Turtle.....	40
(3). Gluskap's tricks.....	42
(4). Gluskap's origin (from Rand's "Legends of the Micmacs").....	44
(5). Wind Bird.....	45
(6). Sakilexis aids the people.....	45
(7). Some adventures of Gluskap.....	47
Pokteinskwas stories.....	50
(8). The Bear Lover, Magic Pipe, Storage of Water, and other incidents.....	50
(9). Pokteinskwas I.....	55
(10). Pokteinskwas II.....	59
(11). Fisher and Pokteinskwas—First version.....	59
(12). Fisher and Pokteinskwas—Second version.....	62
(13). Fisher.....	64
Mekweisit stories.....	65
(14). Mekweisit and his brother.....	65
(15). Mekweisit.....	69
Miscellaneous myths and tales.....	75
(16). Kiwakw.....	75
(17). Partridge.....	77
(18). Rabbit's tricks.....	79
(19). Laks goes salmon-spearing.....	81
(20). How wolverine was frozen to death.....	82
(21). How a man avenged himself on his wife's paramour.....	83
(22). Alasta.....	84
(23). The talking vagina.....	86
(24). The origin of corn.....	87
(25). The man who followed his wife into spirit land.....	88
(26). Reprint of a tale from Le Clercq's "New Relation of Gaspeia".....	91
(27). The moose people.....	95
(28). The mountain man.....	97
(29). The boy who lived with the bears.....	99
(30). The man who lived with the she-bear.....	101
(31). The Indian who understood the language of the dogs.....	104
Tales of war and adventure.....	106
(32). How the Mohawk war party was drowned.....	106
(33). A war party drowned by two women (from Rand's "Legends of the Micmacs").....	107
(34). An army drowned by a single man (from Rand's "Legends of the Micmacs").....	108
(35). A war incident (from Rand's "Legends of the Micmacs").....	109
(36). Indian strategy (from Rand's "Legends of the Micmacs").....	110
(37). The adventures of Elnadu.....	111
(38). A story told to John Giles.....	111
(39). How two Malecites were captured and what they did to escape.....	115
(40). Story of the two Malecites who went west, how one was killed and the other married and escaped.....	121
Micmac stories.....	126
(41). The naming of Restigouche, a Micmac story.....	126
(42). The Micmacs take vengeance on the Mohawks.....	129

# MALECITE TALES

## GLUSKAP MYTHS

### (1). Gluskap.<sup>1</sup>

Gluskap and his mother came to St. John barbour from the south. Their canoe was an island. They landed at March creek below St. John. The Indians saw him coming and were amazed at the sight of his canoe. At once they knew that he had greater power than anyone else, for he was doing amazing things.

The winter following his arrival he went up the St. John river to where the beaver had their dam.<sup>2</sup> After examining it he proceeded up river in search of more beaver dams, going as far as Mactiquack creek, a little above Kingsclear. Here travelling was difficult with snowshoes; so he slipped them off and left them there. To-day you can see them, for those two islands opposite Mactiquack are called "Gluskap's Snowshoes."

Then he went up as far as Grand falls, across which the beaver had built a dam. He tore it to pieces, as you can see to-day, and drained the water off. He did this so that when he returned to St. John and broke the beaver's dam there, they would have no other pond to go to.

By the time he had finished doing this, spring had come; so he built a canoe and paddle out of stone and went down the river to the place where St. John now is. When he came, the Indians knew that he must have great power to use a stone canoe, so they made him their chief; and in a short time he was known everywhere as the Chief of the Indians.

During that summer he went to the mouth of the Kennebecasis, where the beavers had their homes. These he examined and then he returned to the dam, which was located where the Reversing falls are to-day. He took a stick and broke the dam, so that the

<sup>1</sup> The following long myth of the culture-hero Gluskap, was obtained from Jim Paul, of St. Mary, New Brunswick, in August and December, 1910. The first 57 pages, that is, through the adventures of Turtle, were obtained in August. Jim Paul said he had first heard the story more than forty years before, when he was camping with his father and father-in-law. The rest of the story was obtained in December. Jim Paul had gotten it in the meantime from Newel Joba, of French Village, N.B. The difference in the style of the two portions is quite evident.

<sup>2</sup> The Reversing falls are supposed to be the remains of this dam. The size of the animals was much larger before Gluskap transformed things to their present size. Beavers were much larger than men and threatened their existence.

water ran through and the sods which were carried away by the flood were lodged below. One is known to-day as Partridge Island.<sup>1</sup>

Then he left his grandmother beside the dam with a spear to watch that none of the beavers came through. He himself went up stream in his canoe and came to the beaver's house, which he penetrated, and drove the beavers out. This house is known to-day as "Long Island," and is opposite Rothesay in Kennebecasis bay. Then he called his dogs and went to hunt for the beaver, which he finally found at Milbish bay, between Kennebecasis bay and St. John river, and killed them on a white granite rock. Even to this day you can see the red spots on the white granite where their blood dropped.

He knew that besides these beavers which he had killed there was a young one which had escaped. So again he went up Kennebecasis bay to find it; but seeing that a trap which he had set was not sprung, he returned to the beaver's dam (Reversing falls) and asked his grandmother if the beaver had gotten through. She replied, "No. You know that when beaver want to go through a dam, they make the water muddy, so that you can't see them. The water has been clear here all the time." Gluskap said, "If I don't kill that beaver, he will do a great deal of damage; so I must go and hunt him." His grandmother replied, "No, wait for your brother; he will be here very soon and he will know which way the beaver went." Gluskap said, "It is very strange that I didn't know that I had a brother." "Yes," replied the old woman, "you don't know, but I do." A few days later his brother arrived; he was called Mikumwesu. And Gluskap's grandmother had saved the beaver's tail<sup>2</sup> for him. She roasted it before the fire and gave it to Mikumwesu. While he was eating it, he asked Gluskap if he had killed the beavers. Then Gluskap said that he had killed the old ones but had lost a young beaver. Then Mikumwesu replied, "He has gone up river. Go down to the seashore and gather two stones to throw up river ahead of the beaver to scare him back." So Gluskap did as his brother directed and threw stones up the river; so far did he throw them that they landed ahead of the beaver and scared him back. These stones are called today the "Tobique Rocks" and they are about 3 miles below Perth. The beaver was rather tired by this time and a few miles below the two

<sup>1</sup> Nulceiten call it Kikw Mikhizin, which they translate as "The sod which broke away."

<sup>2</sup> The tail of the beaver is considered by the Indians as the choicest of all morsels.

big rocks he crawled upon the north bank of St. John river and there he died and turned to stone; he can be seen there to this day.

Gluskap stopped at St. John for a while and killed all the dangerous animals at that time. The beaver was very dangerous because it was very large. Gluskap and his brother Mikumwesu, while sitting one day on the cliff at the Narrows, which was right above St. John, began to discuss the improvement of the river for the Indians. Gluskap suggested that one-half of the river run up and the other half run down; in this manner the Indians would be able to go up stream in their canoes without any difficulty. But Mikumwesu disagreed and said, "No, the Indians would have too easy a time." Gluskap replied, "Well, let the water run up stream as far as Spring Hill half the time and the other half of the time let it run down." To this Mikumwesu agreed. So Gluskap and Mikumwesu set to work to destroy the rest of the dam at St. John, so that the water could go through more easily. Then Gluskap said to Mikumwesu, "I am going to leave a picture of myself on this cliff (this was at the Narrows), so that when the Indians go by here, either going up or down in their canoes, they will always be able to see me and remember me for the good deeds I have done."

He and his brother remained there with their grandmother for some time; but finally Gluskap and his brother went up the river in their canoe, leaving their grandmother behind. When they had gone some distance up the St. John river, they crossed over the watershed and continued on their journey down stream to salt water.<sup>1</sup> While going down stream they saw a camp and went ashore, and found an old Groundhog camping there. They called her grandmother and she began to cry. When Gluskap asked her why she cried, she replied, "Half-stone Man, Izignapogos, is camping below,<sup>2</sup> and I have nothing to give you to eat, because he takes away all our food." Gluskap got very angry when he heard this and said, "Go down and tell him the Chief of all the tribes is here and must have something to eat." So she did as Gluskap requested and found the old man sitting in his camp.

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful whether they go from here by the Temiscouata waters to the St. Lawrence river, or whether they cross over the watershed and go down the Restigouche to Chaleur bay.

<sup>2</sup> My informant could give no description of this character. First he translated it as "Half-stone Man" and later as "Lopped-sided stone." It is evidently anthropoid in form, as can be seen from the secondary stem--op.

She said, "Gluskap is here and wants something to eat and he says he must have it."

But Half-stone Man laughed and gave her some meat that had been lying about for a long time, and said to her, "That is good enough for him. He is no better than I am. If that does not suffice, let him come himself and try to obtain something better."

So Groundhog took the bad meat back to Gluskap and told him what had happened. He became very angry and told Groundhog to take it back and tell Half-stone Man that Gluskap must have good meat. When the old woman returned this to Half-stone Man, he only laughed and said, "That is good enough for him."

The old woman said, "He will come himself if you do not give him better meat," and threw the meat at him. Half-stone Man only laughed at this; and when Groundhog came back and told Gluskap what had happened, he immediately started to go over to Half-stone Man's camp. But his brother Mikumwesu called him back and said, "You start too quickly. You have forgotten yourself. You don't yet know how you are going to kill Half-stone Man."

"No," said Gluskap, "I have not forgotten myself. I could easily kill all the people in the world."

Mikumwesu replied, "I know you can, but you do not want to use your power till you have to.<sup>1</sup> You will have plenty of use for it later in your travels. Now Half-stone Man is on the other side of the river and you had better wait till he returns."

So Gluskap began to think how he could kill him. Mikumwesu said, "He is getting some fresh meat, so that when we come to his camp we will see the good meat there and will be the more insulted. You should tarry a little while and consider the matter."

So they lingered and perceived Half-stone Man returning in his canoe. Then Mikumwesu spoke, "You can kill him only by shooting him with my bow and arrow." Gluskap decided to do this, but was somewhat piqued to think that Mikumwesu should offer his bow, which was very small.

But Mikumwesu added, "Your bow is not powerful enough." To this Gluskap replied, "What! My bow not powerful enough? It is a stone bow and the strongest in the world."

<sup>1</sup> There are many instances in the mythology of this region of where a person has been rendered helpless by using up all his power.

Then Mikumwesu said, "That I know, but it is not as strong as mine. Mine you must use if you desire to kill him."

Then Gluskap examined Mikumwesu's bow, and seeing how small it was, could not understand why it was better than his own for this occasion; but Mikumwesu explained, "Half-stone Man is a powerful shaman and can dodge the large arrows of your bow. Therefore do you go and quarrel with him, and then I will shoot him for you. This will show you what my bow can do." Saying this he fired the bow at a large rock, showing Gluskap how powerful it was. When Gluskap, at his brother's request, examined the rock he found that it had been pierced completely. This satisfied him. So he went to the camp of Half-stone Man, who had returned and was sitting with his axe and club, both of stone, beside him. He invited Gluskap to sit down. Gluskap did so and said, "Why did you send me that bad meat to eat?"

Half-stone Man replied, "It is sufficient for you. I should not have sent you any without some reward. All in this vicinity must buy their meat of me, for I alone have it; and you should do the same, for you are not a whit better than the rest, though you do call yourself the great Chief. I am the chief here and can keep all food from the men, if I so desire. I will show you my power." So speaking, he grasped his club and struck a great boulder and smashed it to pieces.

"Now," said he, "there is the meat (pointing to the fresh meat). If you will bring someone in payment you can have the meat; but if not, you will go without it."

Gluskap said, "You speak very boldly. A child could kill you."

By this time Mikumwesu had arrived. He knew that Gluskap could kill Half-stone Man if he so desired. While conversing with Izignapogos, Gluskap smelt the odour of sweet-smelling herbs (migwinsipomp - lovadj, the Iroquois material used instead of tobacco) and knew that Mikumwesu was there, he being the only one who smoked it. Gluskap looked at the smoke-hole at the top of the wigwam and saw Mikumwesu standing on the place where the poles crossed. Right then Half-stone Man and Gluskap were going to fight. Mikumwesu seized his bow and arrow and pinned him to the rock. He then came down

to Gluskap and said, "We had best call everybody to come and share the food." And the animals, large and small, were summoned. They were on the verge of starvation when they came. Groundhog rejoiced; Gluskap bade her fear nothing, that she would have plenty to eat.<sup>1</sup> Groundhog said, "You are not through yet. He has some friends down below."

He then started down the river with his brother in their canoe. Gluskap was paddling. His brother suggested going ashore, as one of Half-stone's partners was down below quite close. "I suppose you know the one I mean," he said, "the big Skunk who can shoot across the ocean." Gluskap said he knew, and that he was there to kill dangerous and large animals. Mikumwesu went ashore and cut out a long stick and told his brother to sharpen it. "That is what we'll use," he said, "to plug him up so that he cannot shoot." Gluskap replied, "No, we won't do that, for he is rather dangerous. But when we get down there, I shall light my pipe. There will arise so much smoke, that he will not be able to see and will be unable to direct his shots. Meanwhile I shall plug him up." Accordingly, when they came around a bend to a narrow place with cliffs on each side, they saw they could not pass without incurring the danger of being shot. So Mikumwesu took his groundhog tobacco pouch from his belt, drew out his special smoking mixture, and began to smoke. The smoke arose and went down the river in the manner of a fog, and then they proceeded, enveloped in the smoke. Skunk was ready to fire when Gluskap shoved the sharp stick into him, and down went the Skunk. Mikumwesu asked why he did not pierce him through so as to kill him. Gluskap replied that he did not want to kill him, but desired to keep him until he became small enough that Indians might use him. He then would not be able to hurt anybody, but would just be able to protect himself.

They proceeded down the river and came to another band of Indians. They went ashore and entered the first tent. They were met by an old woman whom they called Groundhog. After she bade them be seated, Gluskap asked for a glass of water which he was very much in need of. On their approach to this village they had noticed that the water was very dirty and slimy and full

<sup>1</sup> It seems he did not actually store up the food, but used his power to keep it out of the reach of the others and within his own reach, in other words, it was potential use of the food.

of bugs, making it unfit to drink. Grandmother replied that she had no water but that Akwulabemu had it all. "Go and tell him that the Chief wants a drink," said Gluskap. The old woman said, "We can get no water except on giving Akwulabemu a young girl. I have given two girls to him already and have but one remaining. Moreover, he tortures all the girls in his camp. They must obey all his commands, and before speaking to them, he pokes them in the face with a hot poker. Were I to go there I could not recognize my own daughter; she is so scarred and all her hair has been burnt off. But Gluskap insisted that she get the water. Groundhog yielded and sent forth her daughter, who had instructions to say that the Chief insisted absolutely on having the water. She arrived at Akwulabemu's camp and stated her errand. Akwulabemu said in reply, "The great man you have at your camp thinks that he is going to have good water to drink." He put a dish of water on the girl's head, saying, "Take this to the great man. I have been washing my face and feet with it." This greatly angered Gluskap, who refused to use the filthy water. He arose, armed with a club, intending to go forth and break his head and free the water. Gluskap first went forth to destroy Akwulabemu's stone canoe, which was floating near the shore. Then he entered the camp, where he noticed many scarred girls who were too frightened to murmur a sound.

Gluskap approached Akwulabemu and said, "Are you trying to destroy all the people? You should have known that I was coming and that I am Gluskap, chief of everyone." The old man answered, "You may be chief of the animals and men, but you will have to fight first." "Thus do you insult me," said Gluskap, and taking his club, he struck him and broke his skull. An animal sprang forth from his head and at full speed rushed toward the canoe. Gluskap immediately gave chase to it. When the animal saw that the canoe was broken, it suddenly became a serpent. Gluskap killed it with his club, and straightway the springs and brooks filled with water that was clear and pure. Gluskap called out all the bugs and worms and made them a great feast of the snake. Gluskap then returned to the old woman's camp and told her to go out and proclaim to the populace that the great chief had freed the water, that Akwulabemu was dead, and that the springs and

## Wabanaki Literature

### Stories

- Ableegumooch, the Lazy Rabbit
- Badger and the Green Giant
  - Badger and the Koondao
  - Badger and the Star Wives
- Big Magwis and Little Magwis
- Boy Who Worried Tomorrow
  - Changing of Mikcheech
  - Glooscap and His People
    - Glooscap and Winpe
    - Glooscap, the Trickster
  - How Glooscap Found Summer
  - How the Rabbit Lost His Tail
    - Magical Sweet-Grass Doll
- Man Who Was Made a Magician
  - Mooiin, the Bear's Child
  - Nokome and the Ice King
- Oochigeas and the Invisible Boy
  - Rabbit Calls a Truce
    - Run, Rabbit, Run
- Wa-Ba-Ba-Nal, The Northern Lights



Return to Indigenous Peoples' Literature

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## The Man Who Was Made a Magician

Long ago, in the days of Glooscap, there lived a boy named Widjek who could never do anything properly. Perhaps this was because people laughed at him. Nobody disliked Widjek, for he was gentle and friendly, but his awkwardness was funny and so they laughed. The more Widjek tried to win their respect, the more funny he seemed, and the more they laughed, the harder it was for poor Widjek to do anything right.

So, even when he became a man, he was as awkward as ever. He would keep dropping things and falling over his own feet. The people called him Widjek the Moonstruck, because they said he must once have slept with the moon's rays on his face and so spoiled his wits; but Widjek himself was sure he was just like other men except that people didn't laugh at them.

One day Widjek asked his grandmother to make an evening visit. To "make an evening visit" means in the Wabanaki to arrange a marriage. Now the grandmother knew it would not be easy to find a bride for Widjek, but she loved him and determined to do her best. She went first to the Chief's wigwam.

"My grandson is tired of living alone," she said timidly. The Chief smiled but shook his head.

Then she went to each lodge in turn, without success, until she came to the last one of all, which belonged to a man named Nokum who had three unmarried daughters.

"Which of you, my daughters," laughed Nokum, "wishes to marry Widjek the Moonstruck?"

The two older girls indignantly refused, but the youngest daughter, Masusi, who was a kindhearted girl, looked troubled.

"The poor fellow must have someone to care for him and keep his lodge," she said. "I will marry him."

Nokum scowled. He did not like this at all, for Masusi was his favorite daughter, and he hoped to marry her to someone better.

"If your grandson will provide all the meat for my lodge for a full year," he told Widjek's grandmother, "I shall accept him as my son-in-law." Nokum was pretty sure, you see, that the young man would fail.

However, Widjek was so happy to hear Masusi would have him as a husband that he set out next day, determined to show he could be a good provider. But it was the same old story. He could find little game, and even when he did, he stalked it so clumsily that his prey was off and away before he came within arrowshot. Poor Widjek hunted until dusk and got nothing.

Tired and discouraged, he started back to camp, wondering how he was to tell Masusi he had failed again.

Suddenly, he heard music. It was such beautiful music he stopped in his tracks, utterly bewitched. Then, in the path in front of him, appeared three small hairy men playing flutes. They were Megumoowesooos, the Little People of the forest, who are great magicians. Though they were only half as tall as himself, Widjek was so surprised to see them, he tumbled head over heels

backwards. He had never met any Megumoowesoos before. However, they spoke to him in a friendly way and led him into their cave through a door cut out of the solid rock. There they offered him food and drink, and invited him to stay the night.

It was growing dark now and Widjek was glad to delay his return to camp empty-handed, so he accepted the invitation and enjoyed a good meal and a refreshing sleep. In the morning, when the Little People led him from the cave, he saw a great heap of venison lying on the ground.

"It is yours," said the chief Megumoowesoo. "Take it and if you need more, come back--but tell no one where you have been or who gave you these things."

Thanking them joyfully, Widjek hurried back to camp with the bundle on his back. Now his future was sure! With the help of the friendly Megumoowesoos, he could easily keep Nokum's wigwam supplied with meat for a year.

When Widjek walked triumphantly into the village, the people stared at him strangely and his grandmother came running to him with tears in her eyes.

"Grandson!" she cried. "Why have you been gone so long? It is a whole year since you went away. We thought you dead."

Widjek was amazed, for it seemed to him he had been gone only a night and a day.

"It was the magic of the Megumoowesoos," he exclaimed and, forgetting the Little People's warning, he related all that had happened. The people listened with awe, but when he opened his bundle to show them the venison, they burst out laughing. Inside, there was nothing but a heap of poplar bark.

"It is clear," said Nokum coldly, "that you have deceived us. All year you have been ashamed to come home without meat, and now you think to fool us with this made-up story."

"It is all true!" protested poor Widjek. "I could show you the path I took, and the cave, and the footprints of the Megumoowesoos outside!"

The people laughed scornfully.

"Widjek the Moonstruck!"

But the Chief called for silence.

"Poplar bark," he said, "is the food of beavers. It may be that where he found this bark, we will find good beaver hunting."

Widjek gladly offered to lead the hunters to the spot, and he had no difficulty finding the path. It led straight to the place where he had met the Megumoowesoos. Widjek rushed to the end of the path and stared around in dismay. There was no cave now--no door--only bare rock! More over, there were no tracks, and no sign of poplar bark or beaver.

"This settles it," said Nokum. "You have had the year granted you, and have failed." Then all went back to camp, angry with the moonstruck one for disappointing them.

Poor Widjek lingered in the forest, ashamed to follow them. If only he had kept quiet about the Little People. Now his people would laugh at him more than ever. Perhaps even Masusi!

"Oh, why is it," he groaned, "why is it everything I do turns out badly? Am I indeed moonstruck?"

"Certainly not!" growled a strange voice, and Widjek jumped and looked behind him. There,

coming down the path towards him, was the largest bear he had ever seen!

Widjek was no coward, but he had left his weapons some distance away and was helpless. He could never tackle such a creature with his bare hands! So he turned to run--and as usual in his excitement and nervousness, he tripped over his own feet and would have gone sprawling had not the bear stretched out a paw to steady him.

"Fear not, Widjek," said the bear, "for I am he who made your ancestors from the ash tree."

Then Widjek knew he was in the presence of Glooscap.

"O Master," he cried, "I am not worthy of my ancestors. I try and I try to do things right, but I always fail."

"Never mind," said Glooscap, "you will do better in the future, if you will do as I tell you."

"Oh, I will!" cried Widjek eagerly.

Then Glooscap gave him a long curved horn.

"Put this to your ear, and you will hear animals talking a long way off. Follow the sound of their voices and you will always find game."

"They will hear me coming and run away," said Widjek sorrowfully. "They always do."

Then Glooscap gave him also a bag of white feathers and told him to burn them when he was drawing close to game.

"The smoke will be carried on the breeze to them, and they will fall asleep," said Glooscap. "Kill no more than you need for food and these magical powers will never fail you. Hereafter you will be known not as Widjek the Moon struck, but as Widjek the Magician."

And before the young Indian could utter a word of thanks, the great bear had slowly dissolved into space.

This time Widjek kept his own counsel. He was learning wisdom at last.

He went hunting the very next day and quickly found game by listening through the horn. Then he put the animals to sleep with the smoke from the burning feathers. When he returned to camp with a great load of venison-- enough for Nokum's family as well as his own--the people were astonished.

On each succeeding day, he returned with meat enough for both wigwams. Then the people knew he must have some secret power.

"He has become a magician," they whispered to each other, and from that time on, they called him Widjek the Magician.

Now Widjek was a great and honoured member of his tribe, and all the young maidens of the village, including the daughters of the Chief, wished to have him for a husband. The Chief called all the maidens together and told Widjek he could have any one he chose for a wife.

The young man walked slowly down the line of girls, looking carefully at each, and at last he came to Masusi-- Masusi, who had chosen him when he was poor and lonely and despised.

"This is my bride," he said.

And far away on Blomidon, Glooscap nodded and puffed great smoke rings from his pipe. In his

wisdom, he had known all the time that under Widjek's foolish appearance lay a brave and gentle heart. Now all the people knew it too, and would never laugh at him again.

And so--kespeadooksit, once again.

## How the Rabbit Lost His Tail

You have heard how Glooscap came to rule over the Wabanaki and how he made the animals, and how at first some of them were treacherous and disobedient. In time, however, he gave posts of honor to those whom he could trust, and they were proud to be Glooscap's servants. Two dogs became his watchmen, and the loon his messenger and tale-bearer. And, because the rabbit had the kindest heart of all the animals in the forest, Glooscap made Ableegumooch his forest guide.

Now in those days Ableegumooch the Rabbit was a very different animal than he is today. His body was large and round, his legs were straight and even, and he had a long bushy tail. He could run and walk like other animals, not with a hop-hop-hop as he does today.

One day in springtime, when the woods were carpeted with star flowers and lilies-of-the-valley, and the ferns were waist-high, Ableegumooch lay resting beside a fallen log. Hearing a rustle on the path, he peered around his log to see who was coming. It was Uskool the Fisher, a large animal of the weasel tribe, and he was weeping.

"What is the matter with him," wondered the rabbit, who was inquisitive as well as soft-hearted. He popped his head up over the log and Uskool nearly jumped out of his fur with surprise. "It's only me--Ableegumooch," said the rabbit. "Do you mind telling me why you are crying?"

"Oh, greetings, Ableegumooch," sighed Uskool, when he had recovered from his fright. "I'm going to my wedding."

"And that makes you cry?" asked the astonished rabbit.

"Of course not," said Uskool. "I've lost my way, that's the trouble."

"Well, just take your time," said the rabbit sensibly, "and you'll soon find it again."

"But I have no time to spare," groaned the fisher. "My future father-in-law has sworn that if I do not arrive for the wedding by sunset today, he will marry his daughter to Kakakooch the Crow. And, look, already the sun is low in the sky!"

"In that case," said Ableegumooch, "I'd better show you the way. Where are you going?"

"To a village called Wilnech," said Uskool eagerly, "near the bend in the river!"

"I know it well," said the rabbit. "Just follow me."

"Thanks, Ableegumooch," cried the happy fisher. "Now I shall be sure to arrive in time."

So off they went on their journey. Uskool, who was not very quick on the ground, being more accustomed to travel in the trees, moved slowly.

"You go ahead," he told the impatient rabbit, "and I'll follow as fast as I can."

So Ableegumooch ran ahead, and sometimes all Uskool could see of him was his long bushy tail whisking through the trees. So it was that Uskool, looking far ahead and not watching where he stepped, fell suddenly headfirst into a deep pit.

His cries soon brought Ableegumooch running back, and seeing the fisher's trouble, he cried out cheerfully, "Never mind. I'll get you out."

He let his long tail hang down inside the pit.

"Catch hold, and hang on tight, while I pull."

Uskool held on to the rabbit's tail, and Ableegumooch strained mightily to haul him up. Alas, the weight of the fisher was too great. With a loud snap, the rabbit's tail broke off short, within an inch of the root, and there was poor Ableegumooch with hardly any tail at all!

Now you would think that this might have discouraged the rabbit from helping Uskool, but not so. When Ableegumooch made up his mind to do something for somebody, he did it. Holding on to a stout tree with his front paws, he lowered his hinder part into the pit.

"Take hold of my legs," he cried, "and hang on tight. I'll soon pull you out."

Ableegumooch pulled and he pulled until his waist was drawn out thin, and he could feel his hind legs stretching and stretching-- and soon he feared he might lose them too. But at last, just as he thought he must give up, the fisher's head rose above the edge of the pit and he scrambled to safety.

"Well!" said the rabbit as he sat down to catch his breath. "My waist isn't so round as it was, and my hind legs seem a good bit longer than they were. I believe it will make walking rather difficult."

And sure enough, it did. When the rabbit tried to walk, he tumbled head over heels. Finally, to get along at all, he had to hop.

"Oh, well," said the rabbit, "hopping is better than nothing," and after a little practice, he found he could hop quite fast. And so they hurried on through the forest.

At last, just before the sun touched the rim of the trees, they arrived at the bride's village. All the fishers were gathered, waiting, and they smiled and cheered at sight of Uskool and his guide--all but Kakakooch the Crow, who was far from glad to see them! In fact, as soon as he saw Uskool take the bride's hand, he flew out of the village in a temper, and never came back again. But nobody cared about him.

Ableegumooch was the most welcome guest at the wedding when Uskool told the other fishers what he had done. All was feasting and merriment, and the rabbit danced with the bride so hard she fell into a bramble bush and tore her gown. She was in a dreadful state when she found she was not fit to be seen in company, and ran to hide behind a tree. The rabbit was terribly sorry and wanted to help her, so he hopped away to get a caribou skin he had seen drying in the sun, and made a new dress out of it for the bride.

"You must have a fine girdle to go with it," said he, and he cut a thin strip off the end of the skin. Then he put one end of the strip in his mouth and held the other end with his front paws, twisting the strip into a fancy cord. He twisted and twisted, and he twisted it so hard the cord snapped out of his teeth and split his upper lip right up to his nose! And now you see why it is that rabbits are hare lipped!

"Never mind," said Ableegumooch, when the bride wept at his mishap, "it can't be helped," and he gave her the cord just as it was, to tie around her waist.

"Wait right here," said the bride, and she ran off. In a moment she was back, carrying a lovely white fur coat.

"This is for you," she said shyly. "It is the color of the snow, so if you wear it in winter, your enemies will not be able to see you."

Ableegumooch was delighted with his present and promised not to put it on till the snow came, as his brown coat would hide him better in summer. The wedding was over now, and he said goodbye to Uskool and the bride, and started for home.

Now it happened that before he had gone far, he came to a small pool in the woods, so smooth it was like a mirror. Looking into it, the rabbit saw himself for the first time since his accidents, and was aghast. Was this he--this creature with the split lip, the hind legs stretched out of shape, and a tail like a blob of down?

"Oh dear, oh dear," sobbed Ableegumooch, "how can I face my friends looking like this?" Then, in his misery, he remembered Glooscap, his Master. "O Master! See what has happened to your poor guide. I'm not fit to be seen any more, except to laugh at. Please put me back to my former shape."

High up on Blomidon, Glooscap heard the rabbit and came striding down from his lodge to see what was wrong. When he saw poor Ableegumooch, all out of shape, he had all he could do to keep from laughing, though of course he kept a sober face so as not to hurt the rabbit's feelings.

"Come now," he said, "things may not be as bad as you think. You know how fond you are of clover, Ableegumooch?"

The rabbit nodded piteously.

"And you know how hard it is to find. Well, with that long cleft in your lip, you will be able to smell clover even when it is miles away!"

"That's good," said the rabbit, cheering up a little, "but it's very uncomfortable having to hop everywhere I go."

"Perhaps, for a time," said Glooscap, "but have you noticed how much faster you hop than you used to run?"

The rabbit did a little hop, and a jump or two, just to see.

"Why I believe you're right!" he cried, but then his face fell again. "But my tail, Master! I mind that most of all. I was so proud of it."

"It was certainly a handsome tail," admitted the Great Chief, "but recall how it used to catch in thorns and brambles."

"That's true!" cried the rabbit, excitedly, "and it was very awkward when Wokwes the Fox was chasing me! Now I can slip through the narrowest places with no trouble at all!" And he laughed with delight. "Why--with my new legs, my cleft lip, and without my long tiresome tail, I'm a better rabbit than I was before!"

"So you are!" said Glooscap, and at last he was able to laugh. When Glooscap laughs heartily, the land shakes and the trees bend over, so the rabbit had to hold on tightly to a tree to keep from being knocked over. "So you are indeed!" laughed Glooscap.

And that is why the rabbit and the rabbit's children, and his children's children have had, ever since that day, a little white scut of a tail, a cleft lip, and long hind legs on which they can hop all day and never tire. And since then, too, in winter, rabbits wear white coats.

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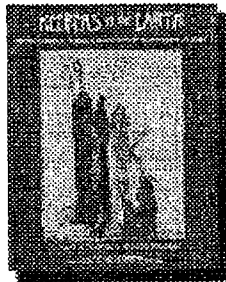
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**Table of Contents**

Foreword  
Acknowledgments  
Map Showing the Cultural Areas and Tribal Locations of Native North  
American Groups  
Introduction: Steps for Using This Book Effectively

## **PART ONE**

### **A Guide for Using and Enjoying This Book**

#### **1 Of Science and Indian Myths**

#### **2 Tips and Techniques for Bringing This Book to Life**

## **PART TWO**

### **Native American Stories and Environmental Activities**

#### **3 The Coming of Gluscabí (Abenaki—Northeast Woodlands)** Topic: *Sense of Place* Activity: Once Upon a Place

#### **4 The Earth on Turtle's Back (Onondaga—Northeast Woodlands)** Topic: *Nature and Human Needs* Activity: Nature: Who Needs It? The Turtle's Gifts to People

#### **5 Four Worlds: The Dine Story of Creation (Dine [Navajo]—Southwest)** Topic: *Trees and Their Values; Stewardship* Activities: Brother Soil, Sister Tree Tree People Fire

#### **6 Loo-Wit, The Fire-Keeper (Nisqually—Pacific Northwest)** Topic: *Energy: Forms, Sources, and Conservation* Activities: The Energy Experience Energy: Lose It as You Use It Care Pairs

#### **7 How Grandmother Spider Stole the Sun (Muskogee [Creek]—Oklahoma)** Topic: *Photosynthesis, Energy Flow and The Cycle of Day and Night* Activities: Sun Circle Vored to Death DaylightNight Earth

#### **8 Tunka-Shila, Grandfather Rock (Lakota [Sioux]—Great Plains) Old Man Coyote and the Rock (Pawnee—Great Plains)** Topic: *Geology and Soil* Activities: Rock to Rock: A Fantasy Journey

Rock Charades  
 Making Soil  
 Wind and Weather

# 9

## **Gluscabí and the Wind Eagle (Abenaki—Northeast Woodlands)**

Topic: *Wind, Weather, Clean Air and Seed Dispersal*

Activities: Catch the Wind

From Whence the Wind?

Things That Blow In On the Wind

Water

# 10

## **The Hero Twins and the Swallower of Clouds (Zuni—Southwest)**

## **Koluscap and the Water Monster (MicMac and Maliseet—Nova Scotia)**

Topic: *Fresh Water and Its Inhabitants*

Activities: Rain Making

Life in a Pond or Stream

Water: Here Today, Where Tomorrow?

Water Cycle Relay

# 11

## **How Thunder and Earthquake Made Ocean (Yurok—California)**

## **Sedna, The Woman Under the Sea (Inuit—Arctic Regions)**

Topic: *The Open Ocean and Inuit (Eskimo) Survival*

Activities: Pelagic Charades

Ocean Life: The Large and the Small of It

Making Waves and Other Current Events

Saltwater Taste and Freeze

People of the Sea

# 12

## **How Raven Made the Tides (Tsimshian—Pacific Northwest)**

Topic: *The Seashore*

Activities: Seashore Symphony

Tide Tack Toe

Filter Feeders

Waves Ahoy!

Seashore Solitude

Sky

# 13

## **How Coyote Was the Moon (Kalispel—Idaho)**

Topic: *The Moon, Solar Eclipse and Lunar Eclipse*

Activities: Reading the Moon

Moon Walker

Hot Moon, Cold Moon

# 14

## **How Fisher Went to the Skyland: The Origin of the Big Dipper**

## **(Anishinabe—Great Lakes Region)**

Topic: *Astronomy*

Activities: Creating Constellations

From the Milky Way to the Zodiac

Stargazing

A Stroll to the Sun

Speedy Sunbeams

Seasons

**15****Spring Defeats Winter (Seneca—Northeast Woodlands)**Topic: *Seasons and Seasonal Plant Cycles*

Activities: Season Suite

Friend For All Seasons

Seasons on Earth: out Tilted Planet

Plants and Animals

**16****The Coming of Corn (Cherokee—North Carolina)**Topic: *Farming, Gardening and the Nutrient Cycle*

Activities: The Planter, the Crop and the Soil

Nutrient Cyclers

Farming and the Nutrient Cycle

**17****Manabozho and the Maple Trees****(Anishinabe—Great Lakes Region)**Topic: *Forests, Trees and Plant Succession*

Activities: Tree Parts and Their Functions

Field to Forest

**18****Kokopilau, The Hump-Backed Flute Player (Hopi—Southwest)**Topic: *Insects, Flowers and Pollination*

Activities: Creating Kokopilau

Busy as a Bee

**19****How Turtle Flew South for the Winter****(Dakota [Sioux]—Midwest)**Topic: *Winter and Animal Survival*

Activities: Winter is Coming

Snoozing Away the Winter

Migration: By Day and By Night

Taking Flight: North by South

Begin With Who You Are

**20****Gluscabi and the Game Animals****(Abenaki—Northeast Woodlands)**Topic: *Native American Wildlife Stewardship, Predator and Prey*Activities: *A Journey With the Abenakis*

Predator and Prey

**21****Awi Usdi, The Little Deer (Cherokee—North Carolina)**Topic: *Caring of Animals and Species Survival*

Activities: Caring for Animals: Inside and Outside

Helping a Species in Need

**22****The Origin of Death (Siksika [Blackfeet]—Montana)**Topic: *Life, Death and Carrying Capacity*

Activity: Enough Life Already!

Death and life: Lost and Found

Unity of Earth

**23****The White Buffalo Calf Woman and the Sacred Pipe  
(Lakota [Sioux]—Great Plains)**Topic: *Earth Stewardship: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*

Activities: The Time of Our Lives

Earth Circle of Life

Afterword

Glossary and the Pronunciation Key to Native American Words  
and Names Appearing in this Book

Art and Photographic Credits

Index of Activities Arranged by Subject



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last updated Tuesday, August 01, 2000

**ographics**

What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city AWAHEM Zip code 92807

What is your gender?  
(Please check appropriate box)

Male  
☒ Female

And finally, what is your age?

45

**Additional Comments**

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

Culture & genealogy are very important - "My grandfather hiked & trapped here" "My great grandma used to gather wood here". I desire that the old ways be embedded in the young generations minds as well as - RESPECT - FOR - ELDERES & I feel preserving the culture - heritage are the only ways to do this - example of their elders AND their osmosis.

Thanks for allowing my participation in this survey.

**Demographics**

11. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city Houlton Zip code 04730

12. What is your gender?

(Please check appropriate box)

Male

☒ Female

13. And finally, what is your age? 34

**Additional Comments**

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

I think that land that would sustain  
life would be the best to purchase.

## Demographics

11. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city Monticello Zip code 04760

12. What is your gender?

(Please check appropriate box)

Male

☒ Female

13. And finally, what is your age? 16

## Additional Comments

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

I think that if we purchase land that we should leave it in its ~~original~~ original habitat and state. It would keep all the animals in the area for hunting and fishing around.

**Demographics**

1. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city WELLS Zip code 04090

2. What is your gender?  
(Please check appropriate box)

☒ Male

3. And finally, what is your age? 62

**Additional Comments**

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

I Congratulate our Tribal Leaders on utilizing  
this Survey in order to get the input of Tribal  
Members. I would love to see pristine nature, made  
available to the public, in the form of Nature Park  
(Something approximating Yosemite). Nature would be  
preserved and a revenue source established.

**Biographics**

1. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city Linneus Zip code 04750

2. What is your gender?  
(Please check appropriate box)

Male

Female

13. And finally, what is your age? 15

**Additional Comments**

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

I think that buying tribal lands is really  
great. It gives people a chance to explore  
the wilderness and to get to know  
themselves better.

**demographics**

1. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city Wixomville Zip code 43963  
Ohio

2. What is your gender?  
(Please check appropriate box)

Male

☒ Female

3. And finally, what is your age? 50 in Dec

**Additional Comments**

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

I believe, that our past is just as important; Because: Our People; have lost a big part of our past, we should rebuild our past in order to make a honest future for our Children & Grand Children & their Children; You see, our ways someday will be back, we need to teach our young people now, for the future. — Thank You

aphics

1. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city Houltan Zip code 04730

2. What is your gender?  
(Please check appropriate box)

Male

☒ Female

3. And finally, what is your age? 29

### Additional Comments

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

I think it would be good to purchase land that will help the Tribe's economy. If possible, it would be nice to purchase both land to be developed as well as land to be preserved. Another suggestion would be campgrounds which could be used year-round, produce jobs, & be open to recreation activities for the public.

## Demographics

11. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city Houlton, Maine Zip code 04730

12. What is your gender?

(Please check appropriate box)

Male

☒ Female

13. And finally, what is your age?

21 1/2

## Additional Comments

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

Other than what we have at the nature and animals that  
God brought to this earth.

## Demographics

11. What is the name and zip code of the town/city in which your primary residence is located?

Town/city Hootton, Me Zip code 04730

12. What is your gender?

(Please check appropriate box)

☒ Male  
☐ Female

13. And finally, what is your age? 44

## Additional Comments

Please record any additional comments you may have here:

remember our future  
The children